

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 6731

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PING, GR

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH FORMER PRIME MINISTER SYPROS
MARKEZINIS

AT A FAREWELL LUNCHEON IN MY HONOR YESTERDAY, FORMER
PRIME MINISTER MARKEZINIS TOOK ME ASIDE TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING
COMMENTS ON THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION:

1. HE IS DEEPLY CONCERNED BY FAILURE OF CARAMANLIS TO FORE-
STALL AND BLOCK GROWING ANTI-AMERICANISM IN GREECE.
2. THE ATTACKS ON THE "NATIONALISTS" BY ELEMENTS IN THE
CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT BODED ILL FOR THE COUNTRY'S FUTURE.
MARKEZINIS PREDICTED THAT IF THIS TREND CONTINUES, GREECE
FACES POSSIBILITY OF A NEW CIVIL WAR IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.
3. HE IS CONCERNED BY COMMUNIST INFILTRATION INTO THE PRESS
AND ELSEWHERE.
4. IN MARKEZINIS'S VIEW, ONLY THE TWO SUPER-POWERS, US AND USSR,
WERE REALLY DECISIVE ELEMENTS ON THE WORLD SCENE. GREECE
HAD TO CHOOSE TO ALLY ITSELF WITH ONE AND IT MUST BE US.
THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE. HE SPECIFICALLY NOTED THAT
FRANCE COULD NOT PLAY THIS ROLE.

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5. HE THOUGHT GOOD RELATIONS WITH TURKEY FUNDAMENTAL AND

IMPLIED CARAMANLIS GOVERNMENT NOT FULLY APPRECIATIVE OF IMPORTANCE OF SUCH RELATIONS. IN ADDITION, HE EXPRESSED STRONG CONVICTION THAT GREECE MUST MAKE A MAJOR EFFORT TO ESTABLISH ESPECIALLY CLOSE TIES WITH ITALY. IN HIS OPINION, ITALY, GREECE AND TURKEY SHOULD DEVELOP SPECIALLY CLOSE RELATIONS AS A MEAN TO CREATE NEEDED GROUP STRENGTH IN EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.

6. HE CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT HIS APPROACH OF THE THREE "F'S" (FORGIVE, FORGET, FREE ELECTIONS) UNDER PAPADOPOULOS WAS A MORE SUITABLE GREEK PATH BACK TO DEMOCRACY AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT THAN PRESENT APPROACH. HE DOES NOT CONSIDER THAT CARAMANLIS IS REALLY SUFFICIENTLY ENGAGED IN THE TREMENDOUSLY DIFFICULT POLITICAL PROCESS THAT WILL BE REQUIRED TO RESTORE GREEK DEMOCRACY ON A FIRM BASIS. (I FIND THIS A SELF-SERVING OBSERVATION WITHOUT ANY APPARENT FOUNDATION IN FACT.) INCIDENTALLY, MARKEZINIS TOLD ME HE WOULD REENTER THE POLITICAL SCENE BY FORMING A NEW PARTY, PROVIDED THE NEW ELECTORAL SYSTEM GAVE SMALL PARTIES A REAL CHANCE TO ELECT ITS MEMBERS TO PARLIAMENT.

7. COMMENT: MARKEZINIS IS STILL CONSIDERED ONE OF THE CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL LEADERS WITHIN THE ANGE OF ACCEPTABLE PARTICIPANTS IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN GREECE. HE REMAINS A BRILLIANT AND AGGRESSIVE PERSONALITY BUT ALSO ONE WITH APPEAL TO ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE ELECTORATE WITH SPECIAL TASTES.

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